

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 067653

FOLLOWING REPEAT NEW DELHI 3711 ACTIONSECSTATE INFO
BONN DACCA GENEVA LONDON MOSCOW PARIS MAR 8

QUOTE C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 3711

DEPT PASS DHEW/NIH - INTERAGENCY PRIMATE STEERING COMMITTEE
DR. BENJAMIN BLOOD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: TBIO, TPHY, IN
SUBJECT: MONKEY EXPORT BAN

REF: (A) STATE 55631; (B) STATE 46015, (C) STATE 37251;
(D) 77 DACCA 5672

1. SCIATT MET MARCH 8 WITH DR. G.S. TAWIL, REGIONAL ADVISER
ON LABORATORY SERVICES FOR WHO, WHO HAS BEEN FOLLOWING THE
MONKEY PROBLEM IN THE WHO OFFICE HERE. THE MEETING HAD TO
BE DELAYED BECAUSE OF DR. TAWIL'S ABSENCE FROM NEW DELHI.
DR. TAWIL CONFIRMED THE GLOOMY ASSESSMENT GIVEN IN REF A.
HE SAID THAT TO PREPARE FOR DR. MAHLER'S VISIT WITH PRIME
MINISTER DESAI, THE INDIAN DIRECTORATE-GENERAL OF HEALTH SER-
VICES HAD SENT DESAI A MEMORANDUM, PREPARED WITH WHO PARTICI-
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PAGE 02 STATE 067653

PATION, OUTLINING THE SERIOUSNESS OF THE MONKEY EXPORT BAN
AND DESCRIBING THE KINDS OF PROCEDURES WHO COULD HELP INSTI-
TUTE TO ENSURE THAT MONKEYS WERE ONLY USED FOR THE MOST ESSEN-
TIAL PURPOSES AND WERE HUMANELY TREATED. THE PRIME MINISTER,
HOWEVER, STARTED OFF THE MEETING BY TELLING MAHLER THAT AS
LONG AS HE WAS ALIVE HE WOULD NOT AGREE TO SACRIFICE A SINGLE
MONKEY FOR A HUMAN BEING. THE DISCUSSION MORE OR LESS ENDED

THERE, AND MAHLER FELT - AND THE WHO OFFICE HERE FEELS -
THAT THERE IS NO CHANCE OF ANY REVERSAL OF THE EXPORT BAN AS
LONG AS DESAI IS IN OFFICE.

2. THE BRITISH DID MAKE A REPRESENTATION TO MEA ABOUT THE
BAN, BUT HAVE HEARD NOTHING, AND DO NOT REALLY EXPECT TO HEAR.

3. THUS FAR THE BAN HAS HAD NO EFFECT ON INDIAN SCIENTIFIC
AGENCIES' USE OF PRIMATES FOR VACCINE PRODUCTION OR RESEARCH.
(THE HAFKINE INSTITUTE IN BOMBAY IS TRYING TO GET INTO POLIO
VACCINE PRODUCTION, AND A NUMBER OF MEDICAL RESEARCH AGENC-
IES DO USE MONKEYS, NOTABLY IN RESEARCH ON REPRODUCTIVE
BIOLOGY.) HOWEVER, THERE IS APPARENTLY SOME CONCERN IN THE
RESEARCH ESTABLISHMENT HERE THAT IF THE PRIME MINISTER'S ATTEN-
TION WERE DRAWN TO THEIR USE OF MONKEYS IT TOO WOULD BE BAN-
NED. CONSEQUENTLY WE UNDERSTAND THE INDIAN RESEARCH AGENCIES
HAVE BEEN ADVISED TO LIMIT THEIR USE OF PRIMATES TO THE ABSO-
LUTE MINIMUM.

4. IN VIEW OF WHAT HE REGARDS AS A HOPELESS SITUATION IN
INDIA, DR. TAWIL SAID HE FELT THAT THE ONLY REALISTIC COURSE
WAS TO LOOK ELSEWHERE - TO THE EXTENT RHESUS MONKEYS WERE
ESSENTIAL, TO TRY TO DEVELOP ADEQUATE PROCEDURES WITH BANGLA-
DESH, AND IN GENERAL TO TRY TO GET ALONG WITH OTHER SPECIES.
GOHEEN. UNQUOTE VANCE

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